

# A TALE of RED ROSES

By  
**GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER**

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(Continued.)

So. He arranged for Tommy and himself to take the girls out to see the new waterworks plant on the following day and to witness as balcony patrons on the following night a barn dance of the West End club. He planned a country club dinner for the day after, and then reaching nonchalantly into his waistcoat pocket he dropped into Molly's lap a glittering bauble, which looked like a glass hickory nut.

"Take that down to Duvy's" he directed, "it fitted to your finger," he directed.

She picked it up incredulously. It couldn't be real!

"Why, it's a diamond!" she gasped as it lay flashing and gleaming in her hand, and she saw the perfect cutting and wonderful fire of it. The realization started her so that she almost dropped it.

"It had better be or somebody goes to jail," he informed her. "That rock set me back the price of a house and lot."

"But, Mr. Sledge, I can't accept this," she earnestly assured him.

"Why not?" he demanded, studying her heavily. "You're to be my wife."

She was pale stricken more by his look than his words.

"It's too large for a ring, for one thing," she evaded.

"Why?" he again rumbled.

She decided to leave out the question of good taste.

"You couldn't put a glove over it," she explained.

He looked at it reproachfully.

"Huh!" he commented. "It's a peach, though, ain't it?"

Here was a proposition on which she could heartily agree.

"It's a beauty—a marvel!" she enthusiastically told him, ashamed, in some degree, that she so much admired the little thing as it lay in her palm.

She handed it over to him, and as his palm touched hers she felt the tingle of him for the first time. It was as if she had inadvertently touched an electric battery, and she jerked back her hand.

Between them they dropped the diamond, and it rolled under Fern's chair.

Tommy Reeler picked it up.

"Swell pebble, Ben," he approved and poured it into Fern's hand, where it lay glittering and glittering and glittering and would not be still.

"Oh, you darling!" Fern murmured to it. "Where did this drop from?"

"Present for Molly," explained Sledge modestly. "Too big for a ring. Can't pull a glove over it. I'm gonna have it set in a necklace."

Three days later the necklace came out, but by that time Molly had given up all hope of heading Sledge off. The only thing she could do, she resolved, in a hilarious conference with Fern, would be to accept temporarily any crassly extravagant gift he showered upon her. After the need for fooling him was over she could send them back, and this resolution, once having been formed, the girls spent much time in eager expectation of what the next surprise might be. Sledge was at least making the game exciting, and his perfectly mad, but equally earnest, antics gave both Molly and Fern more fun than they had ever known.

In the meantime, while Sledge and his cheerful co-worker, Tommy Reeler, were keeping the girls busy day and night, the preparations for the secret wedding went steadily on, as did the business preparations of Bert and Frank Marley. Thanksgiving day approached, and things began to focus themselves in the Marley home. The representative of the up state syndicate came to town on schedule. He spent three days in going over the books of the company and examining into Marley's loans. Also, he looked up the matter of the franchises. The company had been given originally a twenty year city charter, which had been twice renewed for ten year periods, its present renewal having three years to run.

"It looks like the regular thing," he said to Marley. "I'm satisfied to give you thirty-six straight through for your stock, ten up your loans and allow you the difference in value, but before I do business, I'll have to see Sledge about this franchise."

"It was part of our understanding that you were to stay away from him," insisted Marley. "If your presence and your errand here are known, Sledge will do something destructive. He has it in for me and will wipe me right off the map."

"He might have it in for me, and I have to see what he can do."

"I'll make it \$24 a share, and you see him afterward," offered Marley.

"Now, I'm bound to see him," declared Mr. Goldman, who was a wiry little man, of great energy and decisiveness. "Don't you worry. He won't connect me with you. I've been in this game too long not to be able to cover my tracks."

Goldman's interview with Sledge was brief, concise and satisfactory, and he began by stating exactly who he was and whom he represented.

"We're looking for street car bargains," he explained, "and we've been advised that stock in the Ring City street railway is well worth picking up at its present price. Do you think so?"

"Uh-huh!" grunted Sledge. "None for sale, though."

"It does seem to be scarce," admitted Goldman. "Still, we'll take what we can get if it looks good. I understand there's some talk of consolidation."

"I wish I was," replied Bendix, showing, for the first time, his knowledge of how important all this was to the big boy. "Molly and Bert Glider are to be married right off the bat."

No man had ever seen Sledge pale before.

"When?" he wheezed.

"Right away. This afternoon! They're being married now!"

Although there were to be no guests at the Marley wedding, the house was naturally in a state of much tension as the time approached. Molly, for two hours before the minister was to arrive, was engaged in the finishing touches of her toilet, which was fully as elaborate, though not so conventional, as if the function was to be the most formal one possible, and her boudoir, from one end to the other, was cluttered with fluffy finery, with toilet accessories, with two maids and Fern Burbank, the three latter articles being in a state closely bordering on hysteria.

Downstairs Bert Glider wandered from room to room feeling more in the way than if he were an unbidden guest at somebody else's wedding, his only human companion being an occasional contact with the thin legged butler, who, under the excitement of the occasion, had opened a surreptitious bottle of champagne in the pantry, and there being plenty of room in his intellect, had succumbed to the inevitable gloom of the occasion.

The most busily occupied one of all, however, was Frank Marley, who, from immediately after breakfast, had ensconced himself in his den, where he somewhat sadly finished his connection with many odds and ends of local business and social institutions, writing checks and friendly notes all the morning.

He even had his lunch brought in to him, for, truth to tell, he preferred rather to be alone than to be with Bert on this particular day. He felt somehow as if he could never be quite

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## GIRLS:

### Do You Want Good Work?

A big increase in our corset business gives an opening for 500 more girls and women in The Warner Brother Company factories.

Experienced Hands can begin at once with good pay in the Corset Department, Accessory Department, Paper Box Department, or Metal Department.

Beginners will be taught the work they prefer and will be paid 15 cents an hour while learning.

### No Night Work—Half Holiday Saturday

We work only in the day time, 48 hours per week. Here are the hours of work each week:

Monday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Tuesday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Wednesday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Thursday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Friday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 4:30
Saturday	7:30 to 11:30.	

We try to take care of our employees in the best possible way. We pay well and have steady work. There is a trained nurse on hand at all times, whose services are free, for sickness or injury. We have also a free library of new books and magazines.

### Call at our Employment Office

corner Lafayette and Gregory Streets, and we will gladly explain the work and pay, and arrange for immediate work.

## The Warner Brothers Company

### ALLIGATOR DASH DISRUPTS DINNER

Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 12.—The Florida contingent of the Daughters of the American Revolution met for a dinner in the Windsor hotel here Thursday night and some thoughtful person, to give local color to the affair put several small No. 9A alligators in the pool of the fountain in the room where the alligators used to be kept.

The alligators ate up the goldfish as a first course and then, attracted by the merry sounds and rattling of knives, crawled out of the tank and mingled with the diners—for a moment only. The Revolutionary Daughters declined to do their part of the mingling and with a series of shrieks they rapidly mounted the dining room chairs.

The alligators wagged their tails in apparent delight at the sensation, but they did not try to climb the chairs. The women continued to scream, and a phalanx of brave waiters charged on the alligators and drove them back into the shallow pool, where two of the waiters stood guard to prevent them escaping again. The soup was cold by that time and was eaten in silence so as not to stir up the alligators to making a fresh sortie.

It was agreed that the scheme of introducing local color was a pronounced success; in a way, but any monkey in the color line in Florida does not meet the approval of the Daughters, and they are trying to find out today who did it.

Four 8-inch naval guns, lost overboard from a scow while en route from the Puget Sound navy yard to Seattle last week, have been recovered. They will be rebored.

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